

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the above-identified application are respectfully requested. Claims 19-36 are pending. Applicants note with appreciation the allowance of claims 23-27 and 32-36. Further, Applicants note with appreciation the allowance of claims 22 and 30 if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, upon entry of this Amendment, claims 19 and 28 have been amended to recite the limitations of claims 22 and 30, respectively. Claims 22 and 30 are therefore canceled.

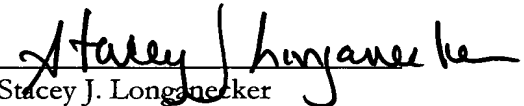
In the Office Action, claims 37-58 filed with the original PCT Request on April 14, 1998 are erroneously indicated as being pending, along with claims 19-36. Applicants respectfully direct the Examiner's attention to the Transmittal Letter concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. § 271 and the concurrently filed Preliminary Amendment, which were submitted with the present application to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on October 13, 2000 and which indicate that the fees for only 18 claims total (i.e., claims 19-36) and 4 independent claims (i.e., claims 19, 23, 28 and 32) were paid. Thus, the above-listing of the claims, including pending claims 19-36 and canceled claims 1-18, constitutes a complete listing of the application claims in compliance with 37 C.F.R. 1.121.

In view of the claim amendments herein, the rejection of claims 19-21, 28, 29 and 31 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is rendered moot.

Appl. No. 09/673,266
Amdt. dated December 6, 2004
Reply to Office Action of August 6, 2004

In view of the above, it is believed that the application is in condition for allowance and notice to this effect is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,


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